



House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon James Cleverly MP
Minister of State, FCDO

25th November 2020

Dear Minister,

I write following my Westminster Hall debate last week on UK support for an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace.

The debate came at an important time, following the passing in the US of the Middle East Partnership for Peace Act by the House of Representatives, and the clearing of a crucial hurdle in the Senate. It is now expected the bill to become law by the end of this year.

During the debate, I asked the following three questions to your colleague, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office):

- 1) *That he will meet with myself and other colleagues to discuss reinstating the UK's financial support for peacebuilding work and reinvigorating its support for an international fund.*
- 2) *That he will ask his officials to explore the possibility of the UK requesting one of the two international partner seats on the new Middle East Partnership for Peace Fund advisory board.*
- 3) *That, at the earliest opportunity after 20 January, he will discuss with the Biden administration how the Middle East Partnership for Peace Fund might evolve into a truly international institution.*

In response to my second question, I was pleased that the Minister committed to “ask officials to look specifically at whether we should take one of those seats and at the timing of commitments”.

I would be grateful if you would commit to meeting – at the earliest opportunity – with myself and colleagues to further discuss this important issue. As I made clear during the debate, there is a window of opportunity for the UK to support the crucial initiative of creating an international fund for Israeli-Palestinian peace. British expertise in this field will be vital in helping to shape the fund and our concrete support for this initiative would be of enormous significance.

With the incoming Biden administration, there is also the possibility for UK to seize the moment in support of a truly multilateral proposal to advance peace in the Middle East.

Your predecessor, Alastair Burt, made history by becoming the first government minister anywhere in the world to endorse this concept. You can now take this even further by committing tangible UK support to the international fund through taking one of the international seats on its advisory board. I urge you to commit to doing so without delay.

I look forward to hearing from you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine".

Catherine McKinnell MP
Vice-chair, Labour Friends of Israel
Member of Parliament for Newcastle upon Tyne North